



OFFICE OF AGRICULTURE

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Jeremy V. Criss
Director

Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes July 17, 2018

Agenda items are bolded and discussion is un-bolded.

Attendance: Doug Lechliden, Peter Driscoll, Ben Allnut, Chuck Schuster, Eleanor Leak, Linda Lewis, Jane Evans, Leonard Yourman, Patrick Jamison, Michele Cropp, Angie McNally, Lori Larson

Staff: Jeremy Criss

- 1. Meeting Called to Order and Introductions.** Newly appointed members to the AAC were introduced to the committee.
- 2. Approval of the June 19, 2018 AAC Meeting Minutes-**Approved Evans/ Cropp
- 3. The County Council passed ZTA 18-01 Solar Collection System that proposes 2-megawatt (ranging from 12 to 20 acres in size depending on the property) community solar in all zones with exception to Agricultural Zone. Accessory Solar (120% of onsite energy consumption) will continue to be allowed in the Agricultural Reserve-AR zone. The Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board-APAB has approved a policy for easement properties outside of the AR zone where the property owner wants to install community solar.** Jeremy said that he has been contacted by representatives of solar companies regarding solar installations in the Rural Cluster-RC zone. Today the County Council introduced ZTA 18-08 that will require site plans for certain types of solar installations.
- 4. The Planning Housing and Economic Development Committee will review ZTA 18-03 on July 9, 2018. Seven of the nine Council members are now signed on to the ZTA 18-03 as introduced. Amendments to the ZTA are still under consideration. The PHED Committee Work Session is scheduled for July 9, 2018.**
http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/Viewer.php?view_id=169&event_id=8008&meta_id=159335 Doug Lechliden said he attended the PHED Committee work session and there was a long discussion of the concerns surrounding small farms being allowed to conduct farm alcohol production uses and whether farming would still be considered the primary use of the property. They asked Jeremy to the table and he walked them through the criteria for eligibility and how the standards would be applied to



determine whether the use would be allowed or not. Many of the concerns were already addressed in the criteria for eligibility contained in the ZTA. The Montgomery County Farm Bureau has taken a neutral position on the ZTA 18-03. Doug said that Waredaca and Brookville Beer Farm are very busy and doing well making money. Waredaca now has the latest generation of family members working on the farm in the farm brewery. Jeremy explained how the agricultural use assessment works and that owners of smaller properties will have a very difficult time generating more than \$2,500 in farm income to support agricultural use assessment. Patrick Jamison said that owners of farm alcohol production will need to make large investments of capital up front without immediate returns or income from farming. This environment will limit the total number of operations in the County. Patrick said the farm alcohol production market will create new demand for local agricultural products used as ingredients for beer, wine, cider and distilled spirits. Michele said she regularly picks up spent grain from several breweries in the region to feed her cows back at the family farm. Michele said that other beef producers also benefit from breweries that need to dispose of spent grain. Small farm breweries do not generate enough spent grain to pick up 10,000 pounds equivalent of animal feed.

- 5. There have been seven Agritourism Study Advisory Committee meetings (November 29, 2017, January 17, 2018, February 21, 2018, April 2, 2018, April 18, 2018, May 16, 2018 and June 20, 2018.) The Agritourism Advisory Committee has agreed to recess during July and August to allow time for the consultant to complete its work and recommendations. The ASAC has agreed to reconvene in September to review the recommendations of the consultant.** Jeremy said that some of the members of the Agritourism Advisory Committee are frustrated by the long discussions during the meetings that have produced little agreement between the members. The Chair of the Committee, Jane Seigler has done an excellent job of keeping the committee focused during the meetings and staying within the time allowed for each agenda item. Linda asked how much of the \$50 K is remaining for the consultant to do their work. Jeremy said he was not sure as this was an appropriation to the MNCPPC. The AAC discussed the benefits of the County Council approving ZTA 18-03. This outcome would help to narrow the focus of the Agritourism Advisory Committee on other types of agritourism venues that do not involve farm alcohol production.
- 6. On July 20, 2018, the agricultural agencies will sponsor an event to celebrate the 50th Anniversary and Recognition of Conservation Tillage including no till farming in the County. The event will consist of an optional tour of farms in the morning with a luncheon and short program at the County Agricultural Fair.** Jeremy said we have a good number of folks that have RSVP to attend the farm tour in the morning and the luncheon in the afternoon at the County Fair Grounds. This event represents an opportunity for Montgomery County to demonstrate the long-term commitment farmers embracing non-till farming practices.
- 7. County Council Confirmation for appointment to Rustic Roads Advisory Committee-Lonnie Luther new farmer member.**
- 8. County Council Confirmation of appointments to the Agricultural Advisory Committee-new farmers-Susan Butler, Ben Butler, and Angie McNally, new non-farmers-Zach Ferguson and Leonard Yourman.**

9. **The 29th Annual Farm Tour and Harvest Sale Brochure-July 28-29, 2018.**
10. **County 2015-2016 Bridge Inventory Report as follow up to Patrick Jamison's concern on weight restricted bridges.** <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dote/Resources/Files/2015%20Inventory%20Summary%20Book.pdf> Jeremy handed out a hard copy of the Bridge Inventory Report for the County. The committee discussed several Rustic Roads that need repair and improvements. Jeremy said the OAG is working with the County DOT to schedule a meeting of residents that live along the gravel portion of River Road to discuss potential improvements. Linda Lewis has offered to host this meeting at her Farm Market.
11. **The next meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee is August 21, 2018?** The Committee discussed the number of meetings that were cancelled during the winter months that impacts the requirement where the AAC should meet at least 10 times per year. The Committee agreed to conduct the August meeting following the August 13, 2018 Agricultural Leaders Luncheon. Cropp/ Lewis-August 13, 2018 next AAC meeting.
12. Hearing not additional items the meeting was adjourned. Cropp/ Lewis

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Supervisors-July 10, 2018@ 7:00pm
Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board-July 10, 2018 @7:00pm
Montgomery Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors-July 13, 2018@ 9:00am
Ag Advisory Committee-July 17, 2018 @ 7:00pm-Holy Cross Hospital
50th Anniversary and Recognition of Conservation Tillage-July 20, 2018
29th Annual Farm Tour and Harvest Sale- July 28 & 29, 2018
70th Montgomery County Agricultural Fair-August 10-18, 2018